

# OpenTheo

## War and Peace (Part 2)



### **Toward a Radically Christian Counterculture** - Steve Gregg

In this discussion, Steve Gregg explores the Christian attitude toward war and addresses the hard ethical issues surrounding the matter. He argues that the choice to participate in wars is not simply a matter of justice, and that Christians should not gravitate towards participant aspects of belief towards war. Gregg suggests that loyalty lies in citizenship of heaven and that Christians should act as peacemaking ambassadors, viewing the Old Testament understanding of warfare as a legitimate activity for believers, but not necessarily appropriate for Christians in modern times.

### **Transcript**

Tonight we're continuing on the subject that was raised last time, which has to do with the Christian attitude toward war. The actual name of the lecture is The Culture of Peace Confronts the Culture of War, because we're talking about a radically Christian counterculture, and because it is counter to the dominant culture, it confronts the dominant culture. And no sense confronting the dominant culture unless we have an alternative to it.

And indeed, that which Christ has taught us, that which Christ has left to us, that which Christ has commissioned us to, is a radical alternative to the dominant culture. Not perhaps in every considerable measurement, but in many significant measurements. And I think it's important for us to discover whether this is one of them.

Whether this issue of war is one of those areas where Christ has left us a distinctive, as Christians, in terms of our attitude toward this universal, historic problem. The first war, I suppose, occurred one-on-one with Cain and Abel. And of course, since the early days of Genesis, we find wars being fought.

In some of the very early chapters after the flood, there were wars. And we have never really seen a protracted cessation of war at any time in history. Someone said there was 20 years or something like that in the past 2,000 years where there was no war anywhere in the world.

I don't know what 20 years those were, but maybe that was adding up a half year here

and a half year there and a year there. I'm not sure. We have lived in our lifetime, most of us, in this country, we've certainly lived in a peaceful area, peaceful times in this area.

We are aware of wars going on around the world, and some of you have fought in wars overseas, but none of us have had a war here. And it's easy for us to forget that war is one of the predominant realities that confronts the human race at all times. It just hasn't confronted us here lately.

None of us are draftable because we don't have a draft in this country. And so, you know, a lot of times we're not thrust into the position to have to sort out the hard ethical issues of war. And you might say, what hard ethical issues? Well, it's a very hard ethical issue.

On the one hand, you've got people who would be called pacifists who believe that all war is wrong, and they believe capital punishment is wrong, too, and they believe that all forms of resistance of evil, if it's forcible resistance, is wrong. And on the other hand, you have people who just say, well, if the country goes to war, you're supposed to obey the laws of the land and do what your leaders say and don't ask any questions about the morality of it. And then, on the other hand, there is the Bible.

And as usual, the Bible doesn't just take sides with one of the poles that secular people hold to. There's secular pacifists. There's secular soldiers and warrior types.

We could say there's secular doves and secular hawks. Are Christians supposed to be hawks or are we supposed to be doves? Well, Christians who talk about this issue or think about it very often just take one of the secular positions, the one that they think fits best their moral sensitivities. If they think human life is too sacred a thing, that no one should ever be allowed to kill another person, they probably move in the direction of total pacifism.

If they think, well, you know, our freedoms, our pursuit of happiness, these are inalienable rights given by our creator. No one has the right to take them away and we have every right to defend them. Well, then they're probably, those sentiments are going to cause them to gravitate toward the more participant aspects of belief in war.

I believe that Christian ethics are much more complex because Jesus didn't come to just give us a rule book. He came to teach us a way of peace. He came to teach us a way, a walk in the spirit and the spirit of God is our guide.

We are, of course, governed by the word of God and instructed from the word of God, but we are guided by the Holy Spirit. Now, he's the same Holy Spirit who inspired the word, so he's not going to guide contrary to the word of God. But there are some issues that God did not choose to just put down in black and white as clearly as we might wish.

And he's given us principles. He says, now you live according to the Holy Spirit and he

will not violate these principles. You will not find a place in the Bible that says Christians should fight in war and you will not find a place that says that Christians should not fight in war.

And I said at the beginning of our last time, I'll say it again now, it is not my position that every Christian has to do what I would do, necessarily. Not every Christian has to conclude what I would conclude. But every Christian has to wrestle with these things and make sure that the conclusion he reaches or she reaches is one that is reached from Scripture, not from preference.

From the word of God, not from sentiment. And I dare say that most Christians with whom I've had any conversations on this subject have a lot more of sentiment in their thinking than Bible. A lot more patriotism in their thinking than Jesus in it.

Now, I'm, from those who heard me last week, you know that I, there are many who would call me a pacifist, but pacifists wouldn't call me a pacifist. They wouldn't own me. I'm not, I'm not a believer in total non-resistance.

But, and I do believe, and we've covered some of this, I do believe there are times when the Christian is not only entitled but obligated to resist some forms of evil with some forms of force. And I'm not even willing to say that Christians should never use deadly force. All right? Now, that doesn't make me a very good pacifist.

If I'm willing to say there might be times when it's right for Christians to use deadly force, and there might be many even more times when it's right for the Christians to use some other kind of physical force, maybe coming short of deadly force, but force nonetheless to resist some forms of evil, obviously I can't be called a pacifist with any justice. At the same time, when it comes to war, I believe there are issues that Christians need to be savvy to, biblical issues, that really make us obligated to think hard before we would engage in any form of warfare. And I, my own stance at this point is, I cannot imagine a war.

Maybe I can, I can maybe vaguely imagine a war that I would, that I would personally approve of my own involvement in as a Christian. But I want to tell you why. And then what I'm going to do today, tonight, is as you can see by looking at your notes, well, number one on your outline is a Christian's relationship to domicile nation.

The word domicile, someone asked me what that meant. I was surprised they didn't know because that was a person, a fairly well-educated person. But in case you don't know, I won't ask you to embarrass yourself by asking.

Domicile has related to the word home. And a domicile nation is the nation that, where someone makes their home. It is a term that is used often of expatriates who are overseas, away from home, maybe because they're in the military, maybe they're an

ambassador from another country, or they're a missionary.

They live somewhere other than their native home. They're not living in the home of their, of their citizenship. But they are living somewhere, and that somewhere they live is their home.

It's the domicile nation they live in. I received a phone call from Kuwait today from a friend of mine who's a missionary over there. And his, he's an American.

But his domicile nation is Kuwait. Now, Christians all live in some nation. We live in America.

Christians are in every nation. And the nation you live in is your domicile nation. And after we talk about a Christian's relationship to domicile nations, I want to talk, as you can see, about the arguments from the just war camp.

Now, the just war camp, if you weren't here last time, is the predominant viewpoint of modern evangelicals. Modern evangelicals would not generally say, now some would, but most modern evangelicals would not say that Christians should fight in every war. Because they recognize that some wars are, are simply immoral.

I mean, if you were a German Christian during World War II, even if you as an American Christian fought in World War II, or had parents who did or believed in it, and would have if you were there, most of you would say that the Christians in Germany should not have fought against us. Because our side had just cause, and their side did not. And the just war theory is that Christians ought to fight in some wars, and ought not to fight in others.

And the difference between the wars in which they should fight, and the wars in which they should not fight, is this matter of justice. Is it a just war, or is it an unjust war? Now, this concept of just war, if you don't read Christian books about these kinds of ethical issues, you may not have even heard the word just war. But it's what almost all Christian ethicists, and all Christian thinkers today, seem to want to support this just war theory.

And the theory is this. That if your domicile nation is involved in a war that is a just war, then you as a Christian ought to participate and support the effort. If, however, your nation is involved in a war that is not a just war, then you should not do so.

You should stand aloof and say, I can't do that. That's evil. This is an evil war.

I can't do it. Of course, there are some Christians who say you should fight in any war your nation tells you to fight in, because after all, you're supposed to obey the authorities. In which case, I guess the same people would say, if the authorities told you to mow down a line of unarmed Jews with a machine gun, they figure, well, you ought to do that.

I don't agree with that ethic, and neither do the American people, or the allies, according to the verdict of the Nuremberg trials. It is not safe to say, well, just because the authorities said I should do something, I guess that makes it right. Christians have reached a conclusion, if they are true Christians, that there is another king, one Jesus.

And what he says trumps what any king on earth says. And so, it's not simply a matter of just, if the government drafts you, go. If they tell you to go bomb that city, go bomb it, because after all, you're supposed to obey the government in measure.

You're not supposed to obey any government if it requires you to disobey the king of kings. If a king on earth tells you to do something that his king, Jesus, says you can't do, you can go over his head and say, I'm sorry, I'll submit to your superiors, which is Jesus Christ. Now, so what I want to do is talk to you about what the Bible teaches about the Christian's relationship to his domicile nation, and then I want to talk about these many arguments that come from the just war camp.

And I've culled quotations from maybe a dozen books on the subject that I've read, from authors who support the idea that Christians ought to participate in a just war. And their arguments are all here. There's almost 30 of them here on the page, and I hope to give a brief response to each one.

Now, if your argument of choice isn't on the sheet, then there will be an opportunity for you to share it afterwards. And if it's truly a different argument than is here, I'll be glad to include it in my notes for next time I teach this. But I think I've got them all.

I've read at least a dozen books on the subject and careful to find out what are all the arguments for a just war, because it's not my position, but it seems to be the standard evangelical viewpoint. Let's talk first of all about us as Christians in the world. What is our relationship to the world, and particularly what is our relationship to the nation in which we live? Now, we who are Americans may well appeal to the fact that those who founded this country, those who discovered this country, those who shaped it into its present constitutional republic form were godly people, or at least God-fearing people.

Some of them were true Christians. Some of them were maybe not true Christians, but they feared God, and many people feel that they were so guided by God that the founding documents of the country are indeed inspired, even as the Bible is. Let me just start out and say I don't accept that premise.

I accept the premise that the founding documents of this country are probably the most enlightened human documents concerning government that have ever been written in history, but that does not mean they stand on a par with Scripture. So I'll just start right there. If our founding documents say we have been given the inalienable right to life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness, well, I say, well, if the Bible agrees with that, fine.

If the Bible speaks of no such right to liberty, no such right to pursue happiness, but rather an obligation to do what Jesus wants, whether it means sacrificing my liberty, sacrificing my happiness, and even sacrificing my life, then I'll go with what the Bible says, because on the Day of Judgment I'm not going to be judged by the founding documents of the United States. I'm going to be judged by the Word of God, and in eternity I want to be on the right side of that judgment, and I want to be on the right side of it now, here in this life as well. Now, in America, because there was a great deal of godliness in our founding, it's easy for Americans to see how God and country are kind of similar.

I mean, the ideas that the founders had seemed to us to be godly ideas, and therefore to follow the American way has very much, among Christians, been felt to be synonymous with doing the Christian thing. But we have to realize that any theology of a Christian's relationship to the domicile nation in which he lives has to work for people in other countries too. If we say, well, Christians ought to just obey the government and do whatever they're told to do, it might be easy for us to say here most of the time, but if you are a Christian in Kuwait, or a Christian in Iran, or a Christian in Communist China, drafted into their military, or a Christian in, you know, the Sudan, or somewhere like that, I mean, whatever's true of us, biblically, whatever the Bible says about Christians here, must be true of Christians everywhere.

Christians are Christians. And we have to find out whether we are somewhat provincial in our application of biblical teaching on this thing, because we have the luxury. We don't belong to an aggressor nation.

At least, I don't think we do. I don't know what CIA is doing behind my back, and maybe we are aggressor nations in many cases. I don't know.

But let's just take the rosier view of things. Put on a rose-colored glasses. Our nation is not an aggressive nation.

Our nation is a nation that just wants to defend her allies, and defend herself, and leave the world alone, right? We're not like Hitler. We're not like the Communists. Now, by the way, foreign nations don't view us that way, and I'm not sure what they know that I don't.

All I know is what the press tells me. I'm not allowed to know anything else. So, I'm going to assume the best.

But whatever the Bible says about my relationship to my nation has to apply to every Christian's relationship to their domicile nation, wherever they are. Even if they live in a nation we would call a godless nation, an aggressor nation. You know, a nation like the nations that the Christians lived in in the first century.

Nero was the emperor during the time that Paul wrote his epistles. And what Paul and Peter said about government doesn't have to be read through the historical lens. Caesar Nero, one of the most corrupt, one of the most perverted, one of the most crazy emperors ever to rule the Roman Empire was the guy that they were writing about when they talked about the government.

And so, I'm going to ask you to do something if you can, and that's try to transport yourself out of the position you really are in, that is as an American citizen, to the idea of, I'm a Christian. Suppose I was in another nation. Suppose I was a Christian in Germany when Hitler was in charge, or in China, you know, now, or in North Korea, or Cuba.

What is my relationship? Well, the Bible tells us a lot about our relationship to the nations we live in. One is that the church is a nation itself. The church itself is a nation.

It is not a political nation, but it is a nation. So it is called in Scripture. In the Old Testament, God told the Jews when He brought them out of Egypt, in Exodus 19, verses 5 and 6, He says, If you will obey My voice indeed and keep My covenant, then you will be a peculiar people unto Me above all nations, for all the earth is Mine, saith the Lord.

And you shall be a kingdom of priests and a peculiar people. Now, the Israelites were told that if they were obedient to God and His covenant, they would be a kingdom, a separate entity, a separate nation, from all other nations, He said. And so, they were to be a nation among the nations.

Now, Israel no longer is in that role. They were dispersed to all the world in the war of 66 to 70 A.D. Some have gone back to Israel now, as we well know, but most Jews are still scattered throughout the world. If someone ever told you that the Jews have all gone back to Israel, that they are all going back, they are rather more hopeful than realistic.

The fact is, there are more Jews in Russia than there are in Israel, and there are more Jews in New York City than there are in the country of Israel. And most of them are not making any plans to go there. So, I mean, the Jews are still in the diaspora.

They are still scattered around the world. There is no recollecting, there is no restoration of that nation that was dispersed in 70 A.D. And why did God allow that to happen? Why did God allow the temple to be destroyed and the nation to be dispersed throughout the world? Because He had replaced it with a new nation. We know this because Jesus said, when He told the parable in Matthew 22 of the vineyard, He told how the Jewish leaders were like the keepers of a vineyard, and God came seeking His fruit, and He sent His prophets out to get it, and they killed the prophets, and He finally sent His Son, and they killed Him too.

You know the story. And Jesus said, here is how this ends. He says, the kingdom of God,

He said to the Jewish people, the kingdom of God is taken from you and is given to a new nation that will bring forth the fruits of it.

I believe that is, if I am not mistaken, I think that is Matthew 22, 44 or thereabouts. Jesus said, the kingdom of God, which was given to the Jews to be God's holy nation, in Exodus 19, He said to them, the kingdom of God is taken from you and is given to a nation. Now, who is that nation? The Brits? The Americans? No, they were not around yet.

The Romans? Certainly not. Well, who is the nation that it was given to? He said, He has given it to a nation that will bring forth the fruits of the kingdom. What are the fruits of the kingdom? Love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, self-control, goodness.

That is the fruits that God is looking for. And the nation that He has given the privilege of bearing those fruits for Him is the disciples of Jesus, which came to be called the church. So that Peter, in addressing the church in 1 Peter chapter 2, spoke to them of their identity or our identity, because we are the church also.

And he used terms which throughout the Old Testament were used of Israel. But he applied them now to the current people of God. He said in 1 Peter 2 verse 9 and 10, But you, now he wrote this to Christians throughout the world, But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

Christians, the church is a holy nation. His own special people that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Who once were not a people.

That is, we came from many nationalities. We were not one people, but we are now a people. We are now the people of God, he says.

So there is a new nation. It is the people of God. It is a peculiar people.

It is a holy nation. And it is what is elsewhere in Scripture referred to as the church, the community of the believers, the body of Christ. It is a holy nation.

It is a nation among the nations. A nation within the nations. And Paul says in Colossians 1 verse 13, of us Christians, he says, That God has translated us out of the power of darkness, or in the Greek, out of the authority of darkness, into the kingdom of His own dear Son.

That is what happened when we were saved. We were formerly citizens of some earthly entity, but we were translated out of that into citizenship in the kingdom of God. He has translated us out of the authority of darkness into the kingdom of His own dear Son.

In Acts chapter 17, the people who heard Paul preach in Thessalonica understood his message pretty well. They said, this man is teaching us to do things contrary to Caesar.



He says, there is another king, one Jesus.

In Acts 17 verse 7. There is another king, one Jesus. And Christians are His kingdom. They are His subjects.

And they live in every nation. And they comprise, as it were, an invisible nation. We are not invisible.

People can see us. But they don't see us as a nation. They just see us as so many people.

Or they might see gatherings of Christians in churches. But they don't understand that what they are looking at is a little tiny bit of a global entity called the body of Christ, where all Christians who have ever been converted are a part of that. It's a nation, a kingdom, that God has established among the nations in order to have some impact and some relationship with it.

Okay. This means that we as Christians are citizens elsewhere. And pilgrims here.

So the Bible says. In Philippians 3.20, the King James says our conversation is in heaven. But if you look up that word conversation in the Greek, you'll find it agreeing with all modern translations on this point.

The Greek word literally means citizenship. Our citizenship is in heaven. Now, a lot of Christians talk.

In fact, almost all preachers I've heard talk about this. Whenever they talk about Philippians 3.20, they say our citizenship is in heaven. Therefore, we have dual citizenship.

We have citizenship in heaven and citizenship here. And I say, wait a minute. Hold on.

You're going a little too fast here. I heard the part in the Bible about citizenship in heaven. Where do you get this other citizenship? Where is the teaching of dual citizenship in the Bible? I read our citizenship is in heaven.

And it's rather interesting because Paul wrote that to the Philippians. The Philippians or Philippi was a city that was a Roman colony. And while not all the regions that Rome had conquered were, you know, granted citizenship to their populace, the Roman colonies, if you're born in a Roman colony, you were automatically a Roman citizen.

Philippi was such a place. So, the people of Philippi were Roman citizens. In fact, Paul had been run out of Philippi by the patriots there because they said what he was teaching was contrary to their, they said he's teaching us to observe things that are unlawful for us Roman citizens to do.

So, Paul got run out. And he writes this letter back and says, listen, gang, you Christians, our citizenship is in heaven. A very patriotic city, that, really big on the Roman citizenship.

But he says, you Christians, you got to realize there's been a switch here. You were citizens of Rome, but now our citizenship is elsewhere. We're citizens of heaven.

Our loyalty is there. Well, what does that make me here? Can't I be a dual citizen? Well, Jesus said you can't serve two masters. How could I have two kings that don't even agree with each other? Jesus and whatever king is of whatever land I'm in.

And he doesn't agree with Jesus. The Bible indicates the kings of this world are at enmity against Christ. And you can look it up in Psalm 2. The kings of this world conspire together against the Lord and against His anointing.

And God sits in heaven and laughs at them. Can I be loyal to two different kings who are not on the same side? You go figure. If you can do it, have at it.

But the Bible assumes you can't. And therefore, my relationship to the entity I live in here, my domicile nation, is described this way by Peter in 1 Peter 2.11. In 1 Peter 2.11, he says, Beloved, I beg you as sojourners, or strangers, the King James says, and pilgrims. That's what we are in this world.

We're strangers and pilgrims. We're sojourners here. We actually have citizenship elsewhere, but we're on a pilgrimage and we're passing through this area.

You know, the Jews who were dispersed throughout the world had to go to Jerusalem from time to time, three times a year for festivals. And they had to pass through various lands to get there. While they were passing through, they had to keep the laws of those lands.

They couldn't be outlaws. They had to behave themselves and they had to, you know, they acknowledged the territory they were in. But they were really, that wasn't their home.

They were just so, they're passing through. They're pilgrims on a pilgrimage, going somewhere else. And that's what Peter says we are in this world.

We are pilgrims. We're not permanent here. Look over at Hebrews chapter 11.

You'll see that this is confirmed by another writer other than Peter. In Hebrews chapter 11, it speaks of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and those patriarchs and their attitude. Now, here's an interesting thing because Abraham was promised a piece of geographical territory, the land of Canaan to be his home and his inheritance for his offspring.

But he saw his citizenship really elsewhere. It says in verse 13, These, and this means

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Sarah also is mentioned in the group. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth.

For those who say such things declare plainly that they are seeking a homeland. And truly, if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is a heavenly country.

Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their father or their God because He has prepared a city for them. This is talking about the heavenly Jerusalem. This is their citizenship.

They were pilgrims here. Strangers here. In John 18.36, Pilate asked Jesus, Are you a king then? And Jesus said, My kingdom is not of this world.

Yes, I am a king. Yes, I have a kingdom. Yes, I am of a nation.

But it is not from here. It is a different kind. It is of a different character.

It has different origins. It is not an earthly nation. This world is not my kingdom.

It is not of here. Now, it is invading. We are invading here.

But this isn't His kingdom. We are sojourners in a world that is different than our own. Our citizenship is elsewhere.

We are strangers and pilgrims here. By the way, Jesus' statement went on. It is relevant to our topic.

Jesus said, My kingdom is not of this world. His second part was, If my kingdom was of this world, my servants would have fought that I should not have been taken by the Jews. But henceforth, my kingdom is not from here.

Now, it is interesting because Jesus not only made this an issue of where the citizenship is, but also applied it to the issue of war. He said, Yes, I am a king. King's servants fight for them, don't they? I mean, that is what the king... You know, the king's servants have to defend their king.

And here I am a king and I have got servants, but they didn't fight. I didn't even let them fight. They tried and I told them, Put away your sword.

He wouldn't let them fight. Why? Because he says, My kingdom is not from this world. If it was, my servants would have fought to keep their king from being captured.

But they didn't. Did you notice that? They wanted to, but the king didn't let them

because it wasn't appropriate. It is not that kind of a kingdom.

Here we are sojourners. Here we are pilgrims. Our citizenship is elsewhere.

I read nowhere in Scripture of dual citizenship. Now, some might say, Didn't Paul appeal to his Roman citizenship? When it was convenient, he did. And there is no reason that we can't.

When I travel overseas, I carry an American passport. As far as the American government is concerned, I am an American citizen. I can't change that unless I renounce my citizenship.

And I got no reason to do that. And because of that, if I was overseas and some kind of problem arose, that I had to go appeal to the American consulate, say, I have got an American passport. I need to have sanctuary here.

I would do that. That is comparable to what Paul did when he said, You can't beat me right now. I am a Roman citizen.

I have the right to a fair trial. Fine. He knew how to take the opportunities that were presented to him.

In the nature of the providence of God, he had certain things he could appeal to. And so do we. And we can say, Well, in the eyes of the world, we are citizens here.

After all, in the eyes of the world, you have got to be a citizen of some country, and this is the one we are in. But in the eyes of the Christian, which is like the eyes of God, I hope, we are supposed to see it as he does, we are really citizens elsewhere, and we are really secret agents here. We are really an invasion, an underground invasion force, because we represent a kingdom that is at war with the kingdoms of this world.

And sometimes we forget that and decide to war on the side of the kingdoms of this world. But the early Christians had no confusion about that, but modern Christians often do. As pilgrims in this world, in whatever domicile nation we are in, we have to be obedient to the local government authority when such obedience does not involve us in disobedience to Christ.

The Scripture makes that fairly plain in a number of ways. First of all, Romans 13, 1 through 7, as well as 1 Peter 2, verses 13 and 14, tell us that we are to be obedient to governmental authority. They are ordained by God for some limited functions, principally to punish criminals.

Peter tells us in 1 Peter 2, and Paul tells us in Romans 13, that the purpose that God ordained government for was to punish evil doers. That means criminals. And so, we don't want to be those.

We don't want to be criminals. And so, we keep the laws. We are not supposed to be criminals, unless we have to be.

We do obey the laws, unless doing so means disobeying our king's laws. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego understood that well enough, because their king, Nebuchadnezzar, told them to bow down to an idol. But they were Jews first.

Babylon was simply their domicile nation. Their loyalty was to Jerusalem and to the kingdom of God there. And they said, Sorry, our king doesn't allow us.

Our king is God. He doesn't allow us to bow down to your idols. And so, into the fiery furnace they went.

Daniel had a similar case of conscientious objection to obeying government authority when they told him to do what his king, God, would not allow him to do. The apostles similarly reacted when the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of the Supreme Court of Israel, said to them, You cannot any longer preach in the name of Jesus. And they said, Well, we'll see about that.

We must obey God rather than man, they said. And the particular man that they were not going to obey was the Supreme Court of their nation. There are times when the Supreme Court or the king or whoever is the highest authority humanly in the nation has got to be defied.

Pharaoh told the midwives, Kill all the Jewish babies when they're born, if they're male. They didn't. They refused.

They feared God, we are told. And they did not obey the order of the king of Pharaoh. And it says, Therefore, God blessed them, and He built them households and honored them because they disobeyed governmental authority because that governmental authority was telling them to do that which is evil in the sight of God.

Clearly, Christians in the domicile nations they live in It's just like if I was, you know, when I'm traveling overseas, and I do this fairly often, I'm in other countries, I have to obey their speed laws. I have to, you know, if they have curfews, I have to stay indoors during, you know, the times that the citizens have to stay indoors. I'm not a citizen there, but I'm not there to make trouble either.

Not that kind of trouble anyway. And therefore, I need to obey their laws unless, of course, their laws involve me in a disobedience to the supreme authority to which I have to answer, which is God. In addition to being all that, in addition to being pilgrims and strangers, we are functioning in the domicile nation that we live in as priests of God.

We are the kingdom of God. We are His kingdom. We are His citizens.

We are His subjects. He's our King. But it is a kingdom of priests.

Now, all kingdoms of the world in biblical times were religious kingdoms. There was no such thing as a secular state. The Babylonian king honored the Babylonian gods and his priests, you know, did their thing.

Every nation had their national religion, their national gods, and their national priesthods. Israel was no exception. They had a priesthood in Israel.

The Levites, some of the Levites, the ones descended from Aaron, were priests. They stood apart from the rest of society in that they had a special function. They didn't have any inheritance in the land.

They had no earthly inheritance. God was their inheritance. They didn't have a secular vocation.

Their vocation was full-time ministry. And that ministry was to teach the people of their nation the Word of God and to intercede to God on behalf of the people. That was what the priests principally did.

I mean, certainly in the act of doing it, they killed animals and burned them on altars and so forth. But basically, the role of a priesthood in any nation, in any religion, is to represent the God that the priesthood is of to the people and represent the people to that God. It's an intermediary role.

It's a mediatorial role. And the kingdom of God today in Christ is a kingdom of priests. There is no priesthood in the church.

That's where the Roman Catholics got it mixed up. They've got ordinary Christians and they've got priests over the Christians. No, the Christians are a kingdom that is comprised entirely of priests.

All the citizens are priests. To who? To the nations. As every nation in ancient times, even Israel, had its own part of its citizenry that were priests to the rest, the kingdom of God is a kingdom of priests to the rest of the world.

It is our place to communicate God's Word to the world and to the nations. It is also our place to intercede for the world and the nations as salt and light and to intercede with God on their behalf to seek mercy and salvation and revival. It is the function of the church in the world to be a nation within the nations.

And in that capacity, we are to function as priests of God representing God's interests to the nation and also appealing for mercy from God for the nation. We are peacemaking ambassadors. Our citizenship is elsewhere, but our domicile is here.

And therefore, Paul likens us to ambassadors. In 2 Corinthians 5, in verses 18-20, I think

most Christians are familiar with the wording. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5.18, Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us, Christians, the ministry of reconciliation.

That is that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. That's what we're here to do is present the word of reconciliation to the world. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ.

As though God were pleading through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. Now, this is what we are.

An ambassador is sent from one nation to another nation to live there to represent the interests of his homeland officially. To officially represent the interests of his homeland in some domicile nation where he's residing. He usually has some official capacity recognized by the government of the receiving nation, unless he's a spy.

But in any case, he is there on an errand from his government. He's there to speak on behalf of his government. That's what we are.

We are ambassadors of God. We are citizens in heaven, pilgrims and strangers here, priests of God, and ambassadors to the nations. We are here to communicate and to represent to the nations God's interests here.

To press upon the nations God's claims here. That's what the Gospel does. The Gospel is in fact a message of letting people know the claims that God has over you, that Jesus is Lord and you need to bring your life under subjection to Him.

That is our message. That's the word of reconciliation. That is our ambassadorship defined.

Jesus said to his disciples that He said, Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. You know, we're here to make peace. And the description of Christians is given twice in the Old Testament in somewhat familiar terms.

One of those places is Isaiah 2. The other is in Micah 4. The words are almost identical in both places. So, we only need to read one of them. But in Isaiah chapter 2, it says in verse 3, Now many people shall come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob.

He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations and rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. Now, I realize that most modern Christians believe that that passage is talking about some future time after Jesus comes back during the millennium. And all the nations will live at peace with each other and won't learn war anymore.

That is not what the early church thought those verses were talking about. And it's not what neither the apostles nor the church fathers believed. Let me just read a few quotes from some of the earliest church fathers.

Justin Martyr, an early Christian martyr in the year 160 A.D. He said, We used to be filled with war, mutual slaughter, and every kind of wickedness. However, now, all of us have throughout the whole earth, meaning all Christians throughout the whole earth, changed our warlike weapons. We have changed our swords into plowshares and our spears into farming implements.

That's Justin Martyr, one of the earliest surviving witnesses of the early church who has left anything in writing. And he obviously understood this passage in Isaiah 2 to represent the lifestyle of Christians. Likewise, another very early Christian, Irenaeus, who knew Polycarp, who knew John, the apostle.

That doesn't mean that what Irenaeus said was canonical or anything. But Irenaeus wrote about 180 A.D., just about 20 years after Justin Martyr. He said, These people, Christians, formed their swords and war lances into plowshares, that is, into instruments used for peaceful purposes.

So now, they are unaccustomed to fighting. When they are struck, they offer also the other cheek. That's what Jesus said to do, interestingly enough, near the end of the 2nd century.

According to Irenaeus, that's what Christians did. Justin Martyr said, in the middle of the 2nd century, all Christians everywhere do this. He says, all of us have throughout the whole earth changed our warlike weapons.

Now, these people could have been wrong because they weren't the apostles. They only knew the apostles. You know? Maybe they misunderstood what the apostles thought about things.

But I don't necessarily think so. There are several other quotes I won't give you from the early fathers. But here's one from Tertullian, who wrote in 207.

He's quoting this very passage from Isaiah. He says, And they will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. In other words, they will change their dispositions of injurious minds, hostile tongues, blasphemy, and all kinds of evil into pursuits of moderation and peace.



Nation will not lift up sword against nation. That is, they will not stir up conflict. Neither will they learn war anymore.

That is, the provocation of hostilities. So, you should learn from this that Christ was not promised to be the powerful in war. Rather, He was promised to pursue peace.

Now, you must deny either that these things are foretold, although they are plainly seen, or that they have been fulfilled, although you read of them. Now, what's interesting is he quotes line by line and interprets Isaiah 2, and he says now, he's writing to his listeners, you either have to deny that they were foretold, but you can see in the prophets they were foretold, or you have to deny that they've been fulfilled. Which he said, obviously, they have been fulfilled.

The Christians are these people. In other words, he interpreted this not as being a picture of a global international peace, but rather, Christians of all nations who have come into the house of the Lord and learned the Lord's ways, have turned over their weapons of war into implements of farming. Now, I will say this.

The early church fathers, to a man, were more pacifist than I am. Much more. And I do not take their words as being canon scripture.

But it is very interesting to read what the earliest spokesman for Christianity after the death of the apostles said was the universal approach of the early Christians for two centuries after Christ. Actually, that notion prevailed for three centuries after Christ. It wasn't until Constantine got somewhat apparently converted that Christians became confused about which citizenship they were of.

And they began to think they were citizens of Rome and fought in Rome's armies. But until then, the early Christians believed, as I think the Bible teaches, that they were citizens of another place. Now, this doesn't mean that Christians are a bunch of passive do-nothings in a world of conflict and a world of injustice.

Christians fight a different warfare. We are soldiers. Among the things the Bible says about us in relation to our domicile nations, we are pilgrims passing through.

We are priests. We are ambassadors. But we're also soldiers, but not in the world's armies.

Once again, the Church Fathers had a lot to say about this, but I'd rather consult the Scriptures on it. And in 2 Corinthians 10, a rather well-known passage, Paul tells us something about our role here. 2 Corinthians 10, verses 4 and 5, Paul says, "...for the weapons of our warfare..." And the word is emphatic.

There are other warfares, but ours is distinctly ours. There is a warfare that we are involved in. And in our warfare, the weapons are not physical.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are mighty in God for the pulling down of strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Hey, those are pretty good weapons. I haven't met anyone who could, with an atomic bomb, bring every thought into captivity to anybody.

But the weapons of our warfare are capable of bringing every thought into captivity of Jesus Christ, because they are mighty through God. It's a different war. It's a different weaponry.

But, thank God it is, because the weapons of worldly warfare have never yet secured peace for very long. Only temporary peace. But the weapons of our warfare bring people into peace with God.

And that's a permanent peace. Now, it's true, we don't expect necessarily everyone in the world to get converted, but we haven't yet found the limits of how many may and what impact that might have on society in general. The point is, we are to be engaged in a warfare.

We are not passive. We are active. We are not wimps and cowards.

We are engaging the most deadly enemies of the human race. Who are those enemies? Well, in Ephesians 6, verse 10, it says, Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we, Christians, do not wrestle against flesh and blood. That's stated categorically. What does flesh and blood refer to? Human beings.

That's a biblical synonym for human beings. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood. Oh? Are we do-nothings then? No, we do a great deal.

We wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places. Then he talks about the need to take on the armor of God. Now, twice Paul tells us, A. We do not have physical weapons.

We don't in our warfare. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. And he said, We do not wrestle against people.

Which was certainly true of the church for the first three centuries. They didn't believe that they should wrestle against people because, well, the apostles said so. We don't wrestle against that kind of enemy.

The people that we are inclined and tempted to wrestle against are people who are

common victims of our common enemy, the devil. They're not the enemy. They think they are, but that's part of their delusion.

They're not our enemy and we're not theirs. The devil and the demons are the enemies of the human race. And those who are taken captive by him to do his will are full of delusion, including the delusion that they're going to find happiness and peace and security by killing us.

But our warfare is not against them, but against the one who has them enslaved. And we don't kill him with weapons that are carnal. You can't beat the devil with those.

I remember my grandmother... I became... I took... You know, reading these scriptures, I reached my present conclusions back when I was very young. My grandmother, a Christian, went to a very, very different kind of church. I mean, one where the pastor of the church was William S. McBurney, Jr., the voice of Americanism broadcast and so forth, and very strongly patriotic.

And he thought, you know, resistance to the idea of Christians fighting in war was a heresy and a demonic one at that. And when my grandmother found out my position on fighting in war, she said, What the Bible says, resist the devil, and he'll flee from you. And I thought, Grandma, are you senile already? But then I found out she wasn't, because lots of Christians often bring this up when they hear this kind of teaching.

They say, But doesn't the Bible say resist the devil? Yes. But what kind of weapon can kill the devil? It doesn't say resist the devil's dupes, the devil's victims, the devil's captives. We're supposed to set them free.

That's what we're commissioned here to do. We're supposed to go out and set the captives free. Instead, it's easier to kill them.

Because setting them free means we might have to die preaching the gospel to them. A lot easier to kill than to die. But Jesus, when He was faced with those two opportunities, He said to Peter, Listen, I could call 12 legions of angels to come down here and take care of this real quick.

But then how should the Word of God be fulfilled? And Christians might say, Well, that's exactly the point. He had to die so the Word of God would be fulfilled. You know what? Read the rest of the Word of God that was written after He died.

We have to die so that the Word of God will be fulfilled too. He that seeks to save his life will lose it, Jesus said. And the apostles took that seriously.

He said, Whoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it to life everlasting. That's the distinctive viewpoint of Christ. There are many religions in the world, but none of them have that viewpoint.

This is... And no secular person can have that viewpoint. Only the Christian. And there ought to be something distinctive about what Jesus taught.

Or else what's the point of Him teaching us at all? He's God. Everything else comes from man. And we need to be careful about buying into man's views.

Now, this business of fighting in this other warfare... Look with me over at 2 Timothy if you would. And then I want to get into these arguments that come from the just war camp. 2 Timothy 2. Paul writes to Timothy, of course, using the warfare motif.

And says in verses 3 and 4, You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. You are a soldier of Jesus Christ. And then he says this, No one engaged in warfare entangles himself in the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who enlisted him to be a soldier.

Now, of course, he's using an analogy from natural soldiery. If a man is enlisted in the army, he doesn't keep his civilian business going on the side. He's got to give all his attention to the warfare.

He's been called to, so he can please his commander. Now, Paul is saying the same with us. But he's already said, We're in a different war.

We are soldiers of Jesus Christ. We're on His errand. We're not on the errand of any secular organized institution called a country.

We are on the errand of the kingdom of God. And that kingdom is not fought with... is not defended with swords and spears, but is advanced with plowshares and pruning hooks. It's something where you sow the seed of the gospel.

You cultivate that seed, and things change. It's a powerful, powerful weapon. And by the way, if you ever see some blades of grass creeping up through and breaking open a sidewalk, you know that God has built into nature illustrations of how powerful seeds can be.

It's those things that Jesus likened to the Word of God preached. It's like a sower sowing seeds. It can break sidewalks open, break concrete open, a soft little blade of grass coming up.

It says in the book of Proverbs, a soft answer turns away wrath. Actually, it's something else. By long entreaty is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.

A soft tongue. Speaking of what you speak, it breaks bones. There is a paradoxical nature to the kingdom of God.

Someone wrote a book years ago called The Upside-Down Kingdom, because in the kingdom of God, the way to greatness is down. The way to survival is to give up your life.

The way to do things is so opposite because God is opposite than this fallen world.

And we are instructed by God to be on His errand doing things His way, and everything is upside down from what the world thinks. That's why the people in Thessalonica said of Paul when he came down, these people who have turned the whole world upside down, they've come here too. Well, they haven't turned the world upside down.

The world is already upside down. It's that they were turning it right side up, but it seemed upside down to the world. And so, it's the orientation you're standing from that makes you look and say, is this right side up? Is this plumb? Is this right? Or is this cockeyed and upside down? Well, the One who calls you to be a soldier is Jesus Christ.

His errand is not to go out and kill all the bad guys. He came to die so they wouldn't have to die forever. He paid the ultimate price, the one that we are so eager to avoid paying ourselves.

He died painfully. Why? So that the bad guys who are His enemies wouldn't have to die and go to hell. That's His errand.

And we're on it. Are we like Him? Are we as unlike Him as the nations of the world are unlike Him? That's what we have to ask ourselves. Again, no curiosity about that among the early Christians.

No conflict. They all knew. They all knew.

They all wrote it. You can read their writings. They knew the apostles.

And they knew what they taught. And they basically went by these things. Now, I want to tell you this.

I'm going to move on to the Just War Camp. I've mentioned the church fathers. I only in the last few years discovered the church fathers.

I had no idea what they taught on any subject for most of my life. But when I began reading the Scriptures when I was 16, and I went into teaching the Scriptures, although I was not raised in a home that believed these things, even though it was a Christian home. I did not go to a church that believed these things, although it was a Christian church.

I read these things in the Bible. And I reached these conclusions though I had not met any older Christian or read a book or anything by anyone. I just said, this is what God says.

And I began to take it up with my father who had fought in World War II. And I said, what do you do with this? You're a Christian. And of course, to this day, he probably can't see it my way.

And I don't expect everyone to. I don't expect everyone here to. And I hope you don't think that in this fellowship, you have to agree with me.

That's one distinctive about the fellowship that I'm in. And the reason I like it is because no one has to agree with anybody. You don't have to agree with me.

You don't have to agree with Steve Bosserabi. You don't have to agree with anybody except God and your own conscience. But that doesn't mean I can't tell you what I think the Bible says.

You can decide for yourself if I'm right or wrong. This is what I think the Bible says about the relationship of Christians to the world, to the domicile nations. We're here as priests.

How many of you have seen the movie *The Mission*? Anyone seen it? It's an older movie. It came out years ago. It's a true story about a Jesuit mission in South America and so forth.

But this one native village that had been converted to Catholicism was being ministered to by some resident Jesuit priests there who had come from Spain. And a war was about to break out. And the Jesuit leader there didn't believe in fighting in war.

He said, you know, we're here to promote the love of Christ. We're not here to die with bloody hands and so forth. We can die, but we can't die with blood on our hands or else we betrayed everything we stood for.

And another priest... The movie is about the conflict between these two guys. They loved each other, but they had different conclusions. The other priest said, these people need me to fight with them.

They're outnumbered by their enemies. I'm going to do everything I can to fight to help defend them. He says, they need me and I'm a priest.

And the other priest said, then serve them as a priest. And that was a very profound line because that's what Christians need to understand. The nations do need our intervention.

That's why God sent us here. The nations do need peace. They don't have it.

They don't even know the way of peace. The way of peace they have not known, the Scripture says. But supposedly we have.

We're supposed to. Jesus taught He's the Prince of Peace. And for that reason, we need to serve the nations as priests.

Anyone can go out and carry a gun and shoot people that they count to be bad guys. Sadly for us, some of the people we might shoot at if we take that role might be

members of the kingdom of God like us. They might be our brothers.

And the guys shooting at Him with us are the devil's brothers. Anyone ever worry about that? Anyone who ever goes to war with a Christian, ever worry about that problem? I mean, why am I fighting anyway? I'm fighting for the interest of a solidarity called the United States. Why are they fighting against us? They're fighting for the interest of a solidarity called whatever country they're from.

Okay. So they're finding their identity in being, let us say, Russians. But they may be Christians.

I'm finding my identity in being an American. Though I'm a Christian. However, my identity is in a solidarity with unbelievers.

The man in the foxhole may hate God. And I'm fighting for Him, with Him, as one with Him. I'm unequally yoked together with unbelievers in a task that isn't my business.

And the guy I'm shooting at might be my fellow priest, my fellow brother, my fellow citizen in the kingdom of God, a fellow pilgrim. And, you know, it's like Christians get their identity all mixed up. Whose side am I on? Am I supposed to be fighting God's war for His kingdom, in which every Christian on the planet is a co-worker with me, a co-conspirator with me against the kingdoms of this world? Or am I supposed to be taking up the interests of petty, temporal, secular nations because their victory makes me comfortable? It's really what it amounts to.

I mean, let's get real with ourselves. Why does it matter to us that America not be taken over by communists? Believe me, it matters to me. I don't want America to be taken over.

I like freedom. I like freedom probably as much as anyone in this room and probably anyone who's ever lived there. I'm a rebel against tyranny.

But as a rebel against tyranny, I'm still under authority. I'm under orders from Christ. And I often have to take a position that doesn't go along with my flesh, doesn't go along with what I really would prefer, what would make me more comfortable.

Why do I like my freedom? Because it makes me comfortable. Why do I want to fight someone who wants to take my freedom? Because I don't want them to take away my comfortableness. Oh, would I be unable to serve God if the Russians took over? No.

Christians in Russia have served God for the whole 70 years that they were under communist dominion. They had to do so underground. They were tortured.

They were killed. But they served God. No one can tell you you can't serve God.

No one can stop you. All they can do is stop you from being comfortable serving God.

And that's what we fight for, isn't it? And while we fight that we might be able to serve God comfortably, not painfully, not in a costly fashion, we're pampered, we're spoiled, and we've lost our identity.

We've lost the sense of who we are and what we're here for because we're in the flesh, in my judgment. Now, I realize that's a strong word. Maybe it's too strong.

But I can't read my Bible and see it any other way. I just can't. But a lot of people can.

And a lot of those people are good people. A lot of them are good Christians. In fact, I will say this.

A lot of them may be much better Christians than I am. And certainly, many of them are better Bible scholars than I am. But being a good Bible scholar doesn't mean you're right.

Everybody's got blind spots. And I want to tell you something. I have quotations here from... Let me see how many I've got.

Oh, I don't know. It must be 7, 8, 10 different books that I've read related to the issue of war from a Christian viewpoint. All the books I've read are written by evangelicals.

All of them have PhDs from some seminary somewhere. All of them are pretty mainstream guys. And all of them disagree with me.

Now, you know, I'd be kind of arrogant to say, well, I think I'm right even though all these great PhD Christians think I'm wrong. But, if I'm serving man, if I'm trying to please man, I'm not the servant of Christ, Paul said. And I don't care how many PhDs they have.

Church fathers didn't ever have PhDs. They didn't have such things as seminaries back then. They just lived for Jesus and died for Jesus.

Almost all of them died martyrs. But they knew what Jesus said. And they weren't afraid to die for what Jesus said.

Now, I want to dialogue with the PhDs. Now, some of you might want to bring up some arguments. I hope you will.

But let me, first of all, let me debate with the PhDs first. And if you agree with their arguments, we can talk about that afterwards. And I truly have no animosity toward these men or toward anyone else who disagrees with me.

I hope you know me that well. I have strong opinions. I'm highly opinionated.

Always have been. I suspect I always will be. But, being opinionated doesn't mean that I think everyone has to agree with me, nor that I have any hostility or any ill feelings



toward anyone who says, Steve, I think you're just flat out wrong.

That's fine. I mean, we all just answer to God for our conscience, convictions. And that's where we have to be.

But let me talk about these arguments. As I said, there's almost 30 of them that are brought up by these guys. I'll tell you who said what.

The first argument... Now, these are all in favor of Christians fighting in a just war. First argument is always no matter who brings it up, there's always the first argument of them all. God sanctioned and even commanded His people's participation in war in Old Testament times.

Case closed. War is okay. Christians fight in war.

That's okay. Right? I mean, who could argue against it? You look at the Old Testament. God didn't just wink when the Jews fought in wars and say, they're doing the wrong thing, but I'll let them get away with it.

He told them to go to war. He told them to annihilate whole populations. Now, if that is true, certainly, if God tells His own people to go fight in wars, then who could argue that fighting in war is immoral? Would God tell His people to do what is immoral? The answer is no, He would not.

And it is not my contention that fighting in war is immoral. It is my contention that in many cases, fighting in war may be the right thing to do for people whose loyalty is to nothing higher than the nation in which they live. But it's a different issue for those who are citizens elsewhere.

The Jews were citizens of an earthly nation. It had earthly borders. It had borders to defend.

It had a civil government to operate. It had enemies around about. They were invaded a great deal.

And because it was in the purpose of God in those days for Israel to exist as a political entity, I don't think God ever wants the church to exist as a political entity. I mean, where in the world is the political entity called the church? Our Roman Catholic friends can tell us where they think it is. And the Mormons can tell us where they think it is.

It actually is geographical. But the real body of Christ doesn't have any geographical center. It's everywhere.

There isn't some place called the church that has borders to defend when they're crossed. Nor is there supposed to be. That's not an oversight on God's part.

He wanted the church to become a spiritual nation. Israel was a type of that. And their battles were types of our battles.

But they were a different kind. Just like their worship was different than ours, their warfare was different than ours. But among those that make this argument, and everyone does, is a professor named John Jefferson Davis who wrote a book called Evangelical Ethics.

He said, The biblical arguments for the just war position begin with the observation that the Old Testament clearly presupposes that warfare can be a legitimate activity for a believer. That's true. The Old Testament does presuppose that warfare can be a legitimate activity for a believer.

I do not disagree with that. I disagree with the implications he brings from it. But the statement is true enough.

Another writer, Lorraine Betner, who wrote a book called The Christian Attitude Toward War, said, There are some thirty-five or more references throughout the Old Testament where God has commanded the use of armed force in carrying out His divine purposes. True, I hadn't counted them up, but I've got no reason to contest it. Thirty-five is fine with me.

If it was a hundred or a thousand, it wouldn't bother me. Yeah, there's a lot of times God has told His people to go out and fight in war to carry out His divine purposes. And He's told us how to carry out His divine purposes too.

In the Old Testament, He told them to war. We never find Him telling anyone to do that in the New Testament. In fact, we find John the Baptist approached by soldiers and they say, What should we do? He says, Do violence to no one.

Well, how can you be a soldier and do violence to no one? Well, only if you're a soldier in peacetime, which they were. But the fact is, you don't have any command to go out and make war in the New Testament. That doesn't mean there's a command not to either.

I'm just saying, in the Old Testament, the Jews did go out and make war at God's command. And that's the difference between their wars and ours in the United States or any other country. Our wars are fought without the command of God.

Because the nations that we domicile in are not God's nations. They are earthly nations. They are temporal nations.

They are secular nations. Yes, yes, yes. Some of the founding documents make reference to God.

But that was then. This is now. You know, some people think, Well, our founders were

godly people.

That makes us a godly nation. Yeah, the Jews could have said that too. Our founder, Moses, was a godly guy.

But most of their history, you read about it in the Kings. Were they a godly nation? No. God judged them.

God said, You're not my people. Why? Because they weren't like their fathers. The nation changed.

And when the nation changed, God said, My relationship with you has changed. And it may well be that there was a godly founding of this nation, that God had a good relationship with this nation, and reciprocally, the nation had a good relationship with God. I don't know.

I wasn't there, but I assume this is true. But things aren't that way now. This is a nation that has set itself, like all the other kings of the earth, against God and against His anointed.

And said, Let us cast His bands from us, and so forth. Now, can we not change back to the way it was? Yes, but not through worldly ways. The only way that can be changed is if the nation is turned back to God.

And that is done through spiritual activity, not weapons of war. If we fight against God, who is bringing judgment on our nation, you can't win when you fight against God. But you can fight on God's side.

But then you have to use His kind of weapons. In the New Testament, there is never any indication that Christians should ever take their plowshares and turn them back into swords. It's the other way around.

And so, whatever may have happened in the Old Testament, fine. Yeah, they also offered animal sacrifices in the Old Testament. That doesn't make me feel like I should do it.

It's a different economy. It's a different kind of thing, nation, different kind of religion, different kind of thing in the Old Testament. That's okay.

I've got no problem with it. The thing is that the Old Testament Israel was a type and a shadow of a spiritual Israel, a spiritual thing. And their warfare is a type of spiritual warfare.

And their inheritance is a type of a spiritual inheritance, and so forth. The Old Testament things are types and shadows of the New. It doesn't help me to know that God told the Jews to circumcise their children.

That doesn't tell me whether I'm supposed to circumcise mine because the Bible says that as far as God's concerned, spiritual circumcision of the heart is all that matters to Him now. So, whatever they may have done then, well, that was then. This is now.

There's a new covenant. There's a new economy. And we have to find out whether God in the New Covenant has told us to do such things.

I don't disagree that He sanctioned war. Now, a second argument that is given is that Jesus sanctioned the Old Testament as Scripture. Lorraine Betner in her book, *The Christian Attitude Toward War*, on page 19, said, In the first place, the pacifist position fails to take into consideration his teaching concerning the authority of Scripture that Jesus considered the Old Testament fully inspired is abundantly clear.

I've never met a pacifist who failed to take that into consideration. Yeah! Jesus did. He presupposed the Old Testament as the Scripture.

And I agree, it is. What's that got to do with it? The Old Testament Scripture that said make three pilgrimages per year to Jerusalem. That was Scripture.

That was the Word of God. But it wasn't uttered to me. That was uttered to Jewish people and Jewish religion in a different situation.

Jesus came as the new covenant maker with new instructions. It's true. Every time Jesus spoke about the Scripture, He took it for granted and even affirmed that that is the Word of God.

I think so too. Well, what's that got to do with it? God never told the Jews to go out and fight Russians. He told them to fight Canaanites.

Am I supposed to go and fight Canaanites now? There aren't any. You see, what God told them to do, it was really Him talking. Sure, it was really the Scripture and it is the Scripture.

But we have to ask who are the instructions to? Are we given the same instructions in our Bible, in our New Testament from our King? That's the question that's more relevant. A third argument. The New Testament approves of Old Testament wars.

John Jefferson Davis in his book *Evangelical Ethics* said on page 234, The contention that Christians, in light of the passages on nonresistance, are barred from office of magistrate and consequently do not face such obligations for the armed defense of third parties is not really tenable according to Hebrews 11, 32-34 which tells about the men of faith in the Old Testament who subdued kingdoms and turned to flight the armies of aliens and so forth. In this text, he continues, The judges of old are held up to the New Testament church as positive examples of faith. By this faith, these saints conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight, etc.

Right? True? The New Testament does talk about those Old Testament wars and commends those people, as he says, for their faith. It also commends Rahab the harlot for her faith, not for being a harlot, but for her faith. It commends Jephthah for his faith, not for sacrificing his daughter, but for his faith.

It commends the judges and David and many others for their faith. And their faith was exhibited in what they did. That exhibited faith.

In the case of warriors who were sent by God to go fight in wars against innumerable enemies, like Gideon, 300 men against 30,000. Yeah, that showed great faith. God told him to go.

He obeyed God. That's good. Good example of faith.

Now, it's an equally good example of faith for us to show that we can obey God when He tells us to do something. The fact that the New Testament endorses the wars of the Old Testament, why shouldn't it? I do too. It has nothing to do with my concern about what is the Christian's obligation.

That is defined by Jesus Christ Himself, the King. And many times Jesus said, You have heard that it was said to them of old, who were they? The people in the Old Testament. He's quoting the Old Testament.

You have heard that it was said to them of old, and then what did He say after that? But I say unto you... Now, what He was saying was, Okay, they did that. They were told by God to do that. Now, I'm telling you what I want you to do.

And it's not that. And so, all these appeals to the Old Testament, they're always made. You know why? Because people who want to support believers fighting wars, they have to appeal to the Old Testament.

There's no New Testament support for their position. They have to go to the Old Testament. And the question then is, is the position, is it valid? Is it right to say, OK, God commanded his people to fight in the Old Testament.

Jesus said the Old Testament is scripture. The New Testament says those people who fought in those wars were great examples of faith. Does that translate into some kind of description of Christian obligation? If you think so, that's all right.

I simply can't see it. Now, here's another question, very relevant. Did morality change with the coming of the New Testament? Now, see, this is the natural offshoot from the previous ones.

I have just said there's nothing wrong with the Jews in the Old Testament fighting in war, but I've suggested that it might not be appropriate for Christians to fight in war.

Christians, well, did morality change? Isn't morality something that always stays the same? I believe, indeed, that morality did not change. I believe that the wars that were moral wars in the Old Testament would be moral wars today.

And the wars that were immoral wars in the Old Testament would be immoral today, too. I simply believe that morality is a constant, because morality is based on the character of God, and that never changes. So no, I would not be among those that say morality has changed.

The question is, though, has God made a change in the vocation of the people of God? That is the relevant question. It's not that morality has changed. It's the question of whether God's commission to His people has changed.

I dare say it has. The great commission that I read is I'm supposed to go into all nations and subdue them by the sword, the sword of the Word of God. I'm supposed to go to all nations and make disciples out of them, not make corpses out of them.

I'm supposed to go into all nations and teach them to observe everything Jesus commanded, not everything Moses commanded. That's the commission of the people of God today. If the old commission hadn't changed, Jesus didn't need to come, probably.

He could have just come and died. He didn't have to teach us anything. He could have just said, you know what they said in the Old Testament? Ditto that.

You know? But that's not what Jesus did. That's not how He taught. Now, how about this? Doesn't Paul sanction the state's use of force in Romans 13? Yeah, he does, actually.

He does. In Romans 13, Paul definitely sanctions the state's use of force. He says that God has made the state officials His avengers of His wrath on those who do ungodly things.

And he says, therefore fear, because they do not bear the sword in vain. Meaning, of course, God has put the sword into their hand and they're supposed to use it. That's violence.

That's resistance of evil. Very plainly taught in the New Testament. God has ordained the state to resist evil.

The question is, has He ordained Christians to be part of that state function? That's a different question. Now, here's where it gets tricky. Because from Constantine on, that was 325 AD, a shift happened in the collective mentality of Christians, mostly.

And remains to this day in the majority of Christians. And that is that there was no obvious dichotomy between being a member of the church and being a member of the state after Constantine. Because Constantine merged the two.

He was the emperor and he became a Christian, part of the church. Suddenly, the state that had always persecuted the church, the state that had crucified Christ, the state that had killed the apostles, the state that had persecuted Christians for 200 years after the time of Christ, suddenly the state was Christian now. Now what? I guess they're us and we're them.

And you know how wonderful things turned out after that. You know how pure the church remained after that. You've heard, no doubt, of the Crusades, the Inquisition.

Now, I mean, you might say, well, Steve, you're kind of picking up some of the darkest spots of the Middle Ages. It wasn't all that bad. Which part wasn't? Ever studied it? Anyone want to go back and live at that time? You had Christian nations then.

Every king was a Christian. Or was he? Well, he thought he was. All the nations were under the church.

Yeah, is that how Jesus ordained it to be? I don't think so. The early Christians, you know, it seems to me that Jesus could have been a king if he'd wanted to. I mean, God could have had him born to the throne.

Or he could have become king some other way. He could have called 12 legions of angels. That could outnumber the armies of Rome.

In fact, on one occasion, the Jews in mass sought to take Jesus by force and make him king in John 6, 15. But he would have nothing to do. He didn't come to do that.

He didn't come to be the political leader. He was from another kingdom. His kingdom was not of this world.

And it would have been a conflict of interest, I believe, for Jesus, who was on one errand, to go about some other errand, even though it might be more glorious and more, you know, Satan offered it to him. Satan said, I'll give you all the kingdoms of the world. You can be the king, Jesus.

Well, I know I could. But I don't like the terms. Satan said, bow down and worship me.

I'll make you the king of all the nations. Well, perhaps you would. I don't know if I can trust you, however.

You're not always a truth teller. But after all, I don't like the terms. And Christians have to say, well, what are the terms? Should Christians be involved in government? I say, well, what are the terms? Well, it's easy.

You just go run for office. You get elected, and you're in. But what's compromised? What is lost? What am I giving up? Is it involving me in a conflict of interest? Am I commissioned by God to wage one warfare, and I'm now getting my entangled in affairs

of this world? Now, that's at least the question we need to ask.

I'm not telling you how you have to answer it. But it is definitely a question that Christians need to ask. And I think they ought to answer it from the Bible, not from their sentiments, that we do too much of that already.

Now, what I'm suggesting to you is this, that God rules the world. And He has ordained three agencies, divinely appointed, to do different parts of what He wants done. One is, of course, the family, which is to populate the world.

The second is the state, which the Bible clearly tells us God has ordained the state to punish evildoers. The third agency is the church. And He has ordained the church to redeem, or to carry the message of redemption, of reconciliation to the world.

Now, early Christians couldn't find any way to reconcile the commission that God gave the church to the commission He gave to the state. And therefore, there are many quotes from them. They said, you know, we just can't get involved in public office.

Now, do I think Christians can't be in public office? No, not necessarily. You might think I should, if I'm going to go with the church fathers. I don't go with them.

I go with what I think the Bible says. You go with what you think it says. But here's what I think it says.

I think Christians can do just about anything that doesn't involve them in a conflict with their calling as Christians, conflict of interest. But as I understand what the Bible says, the church is God's agency of mercy to sinners. And the state is God's agency of judgment to sinners.

Those are very different activities. I suppose a Christian could hold a government office that did not involve him in the issues of punishing sinners. But if he did, if he was in that position, I mean, what's he going to do with his Christianity? Here's what most people say.

Most people say, well, the church as the church can't punish sinners. But a Christian as an individual can if he's an agent of the state. I think, wait a minute.

Is he then renouncing his solidarity with the church in order to, for the time being, when he goes to work for eight hours a day, his solidarity is not with the church, but with the state? Is that not a way of thinking of the church strictly institutionally? What is the church, after all? The church is Christians, period. That's all it is in the Bible. The church is the community of Christians, the body of Christ.

Do I divorce myself from the body of Christ for however many hours a day I go to do something that's not the church's business? I don't know. I don't think I can. I can't.



Some people can, and I don't fault them. I'll tell you the truth. You might think I'm inconsistent.

I probably am. I'm glad there's some Christians in government. I am.

But if they asked me whether I thought they should be there, I'd say, well, that's between you and God. I couldn't be there unless I was in a role in government that I knew would not involve me in any conflict of interest with the special and distinctive calling I have as a Christian. And you know, Paul said, what do I have to do to judge those who are outside the body of Christ? Those who are outside God judges.

We judge those who are inside. Paul saw himself as having a sphere as a Christian that was simply to maintain the justness and the righteousness inside the body of Christ. You know, I received a call just today on the radio from someone who said that over in Toronto, Canada, I guess, recently, maybe today or recently, there were two, or maybe more, but there are at least two same-sex marriages that were conducted legally.

I guess it was like a new thing. And the caller said, what are we supposed to do about that, about this same-sex marriage kind of thing? I said, you know, well, you know, we should speak out against homosexuality because the Bible does. We should speak out against all sin because the Bible does.

But you know what? If you're asking me whether we should go out and march and legislate and do all that stuff to try to stop this from happening, I think we need to clean up our own backyard first. Judgment must begin at the house of God. And we have no moral authority to address the nation if the church still has practicing homosexuals who profess to be Christians in it, if the church has divorce taking place without biblical grounds and allows them to stay in the church, if the church has adultery and fornication and drunkenness going on.

And almost all churches I know of do. And who are we to stand up to the world and say, well, we can't take care of our own backyard, but we sure know what you ought to do. Jesus said, who are you to judge another? You get the beam out of your own eye.

Now, do we have no right to tell the world that they're doing the wrong thing? We have the right to tell them, but only after we've earned that right by being obedient to God ourselves. Judgment begins at the house of God. Paul says, who am I to judge those outside the church? We've got to judge those who are inside the church, he says.

God will judge those outside the church. Now, is that different than what you thought? I'll bet it is. But it's what the Bible says, and it's what I believe the whole Bible says.

I think the whole New Testament teaches that ethic. And by the way, Christians all thought that for 300 years until things got confused with Constantine. Now, a lot of things then come up as questions.

One is, are there some different standards of morality for some than others? Now, this is often asked. Steve, if you're suggesting that it's not immoral for a pagan to fight in wars and serve in these areas, but it would be immoral for a Christian, does that mean that morality isn't the same thing for these people? I mean, if you would say it's not immoral for him to do it, how can you forbid Christians to do that, which you say is not immoral? Here's some men who said that. R.C. Sproul.

In his book *Ethics and a Christian*, he said, quote, some divide the question by admitting that the state has the power of the sword, but Christians are not to participate in the state's function. The question that is raised immediately is, on what grounds would a Christian refuse to obey a civil magistrate who calls the Christians to do something that is within the scope of righteousness? If God commands the state to bear the sword, and the state conscripts the Christian to help him with the task, on what moral grounds could the Christian possibly refuse to comply? Unquote. In the same book, R.C. Sproul said this elsewhere.

The next page, he said, selectivism, as opposed to activism and pacifism, proceeds from the fundamental premise that all wars are wrong, but that not everyone's involvement in war is wrong. Unquote. So what he's suggesting here is, if a person says it's OK for a pagan to fight in war, but not OK for a Christian to, isn't he saying that morality is one thing in this case, and morality is something else in another case? No.

Not necessarily. Let me ask you this. Is it wrong to sleep with your wife? Not for you.

Is it wrong for someone else to? Yes. To sleep with your wife, yes. Why? Because you are authorized by God to do so.

They are not. Is that hard to understand? Is morality different for one than for another? If I sleep with my wife, I'm doing something that is not only moral, but holy. If someone else sleeps with my wife, they're doing something that is as immoral as anything can be.

Same act, different participant. The question is, who has God authorized to do the act? That's the question that has to be asked. It's not, is morality different? Is the person who's doing the act morally qualified to do it? And if God says the state is qualified and ordained by him to do a certain thing, but the church is called to go out and show mercy and turn the other cheek and love their enemy and do good to those who persecute them and bless those who curse them and to do all that, then it seems to me that the activity of the state is right for the state, because God ordained it.

And the activity of the church is right for the church, because God ordained it. But the two are not the same thing. And that is what has confused Christians for the past 1,700 years.

Well, I should also point this out, that even in the Old Testament, where wars were not

only permitted, but commanded to the Jews, the priests were not permitted to go to war. The soldiers were numbered. The priests were numbered separately.

And if you read the book of Numbers, they numbered all the tribes of men who could go to war. Then they come to the Levites and says, they didn't number the Levites on that occasion, because they couldn't go to war. They were the priests.

Now, why? Was it immoral for a priest to go to war when it wasn't immoral for a Judahite or a Reubenite to go to war? Was morality different? It's a question of calling. It's a question of vocation. It's a question of God's commission.

It's not a question of whether the activity is moral or immoral. I do not say that war is always immoral. I certainly think some wars are immoral, and I think some are not immoral.

The question is, who am I in the sight of God, and what is my duty with respect to the particular activity? Am I one who's been authorized by God to do this, or am I called to do something else? Another argument. I'm sorry I'm going kind of late here, but that happens. Here's an argument.

God approves of violence in the interest of judgment or justice. Like the violence of the cross, for instance. To my mind, I mean, here we go.

Let me tell you something. I don't like to speak down on people who disagree with me, but sometimes they are just so lame, I don't know what to say that could be respectful toward it. This gentleman is a scholar.

He's a professor at an evangelical seminary. John Jefferson Davis in his book *Evangelical Ethics*. See if you can see any problem with this thinking here.

Here's his argument. Quote, the New Testament understanding of the cross shows that the demonstration of God's mercy to the sinner cannot be separated from the vindication of the requirements of justice and the punishment of sin. In such a light, the cross of Christ, for example, is a demonstration not only of patient suffering on an innocent victim, but preeminently a vindication of the righteousness and justice of God, even at the price of violence directed against his own son.

Now, what's he saying there? Does that sound, did you get the message? What are you saying? Hard to follow, isn't it? What he's saying is this. True, we are supposed to extend mercy to sinners, but God can mix mercy and violence as in the case of the cross. Violence was done against Christ and mercy was shown to the world.

So you see, we can't condemn violence because sometimes it's God's way of showing mercy and God approves of it. Okay, okay, who did the violence and who did the mercy? As I see it, when I read about the cross or God's dealings in general, especially in the

New Testament, the mercy came from Jesus. The violence came from the devil's people, as I recall.

Jesus said to them, you are of your father the devil. He was a murderer from the beginning. You're gonna kill me, so you're gonna do your father's will.

Yeah, there was violence, there was injustice. It was not done by God's people. It was done by the devil's people.

Could God use that to bring about some good end? Of course, God's very clever. When Joseph's brothers sold him to slavery, was that a good thing to do? No, it was a bad thing to do. The good people didn't do it, the bad people did it.

But God meant it for good. God can take the rotten stuff that people do and take that as raw materials and in His ingenuity, He can work things around so that out comes something for His glory and something that's good. That doesn't mean that the raw material we gave Him was good or justifiable.

Judas Iscariot is not gonna go to heaven because he helped redeem the world by betraying Jesus. God used it for good, but it was a very bad thing He did. To say that Caiaphas and this Sanhedrin and Pilate, they should all go to heaven after all.

Look at how they participated in a violent act that promoted justice and mercy. Well, God sovereignly caused it to be so. That was not their intention.

Godly people didn't do that. I don't understand that this argument makes any sense at all to anyone who can think. And I have seen again and again as I read books, almost all the books I read are by PhDs.

Getting an education never teaches most people how to think. It teaches them how to regurgitate. And I'm not saying if you got an education, you don't know how to think.

You might've known how to think in spite of it, but the fact is I read the works of PhDs and I say, what did these guys spend their money on? Did they want a piece of paper or did they want to learn something? And a lot of these things, I'll tell you, I hope you can see right through them as soon as I read what they say. They're all from PhDs. Here's one from Robert Morey in his book, "'When Is It Right to Fight?' It's a book about the Christian ethics of war.

It's for the eighth argument here. Since God's holy angels engage in warfare, fighting in wars must be permissible. Right? I mean, sure, God's angels fight.

Well, you see it in Revelation 12, seven, Michael and his angels at war against the devil and his angels and all that stuff. Yeah, the angels are warriors. Look in Daniel chapter 10, you've got this angel thing is fighting with the Prince of Persia and Michael comes

and helps.

Yes, the angels and they're holy. So it says fighting in wars must be permissible. Here's what Robert Morey says in, "'When Is It Right to Fight?' Quote, let us be thankful that God does not sit idly by while Satan violently destroys the innocent.

God's angelic armies do not use the techniques of non-resistance in their fight against Satan. Instead, God's army will forcibly cast them out of heaven at his final battle. If pacifism does not work in heaven, neither will it work in earth." Unquote.

Now this, I would call a cute argument, but it's not an intelligent argument because the angels, like the Jews in the Old Testament, fight in the wars that God commands them to fight in and they do God's work. And you know who they're fighting against? Not people. Jesus had opportunity to call the angels to fight against some people.

He wouldn't do it. That wasn't what he wanted the angels to do. They were fighting against the prince of powers like we are, but they were doing it of course in the heavenlies.

But the interesting thing is that the fact that the angels do fight in war was given by Jesus as an argument for us not to. Do you remember where? I alluded to it just now. Jesus said, Peter, put away your sword.

Do you not think that I could at this moment call 12 legions of angels and they would defend me? The angels do the fighting, not us. Because the angels are commissioned to do that, we are not. We don't have to.

Because the angels are stronger than people. They're stronger than our enemies. And God is giving them commands.

We can trust God. As it says in the Old Testament, the angel of the Lord encamps around about them that fear him and delivers him. He has given his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways.

And in their hands they shall bear thee up lest thou dash thy foot against stone. So, I'm glad the angels make war, but it doesn't translate into an argument for me making war. Jesus used it as the argument for the opposite point.

These evangelicals, they come up with sometimes cute arguments, but I'd like to get more evidence that we're being led in the evangelical world by people who can think also and think biblically. I don't think sometimes that they show much evidence of that. Another argument, the use of the warfare motif for the Christian life in the scriptures suggests that war is not in itself a bad or offensive thing.

Here's some quotes. Robert Morey, again, is when is it right to fight? He says, the just

war theory also has Christological foundation. If the scriptures taught that the use of force is intrinsically wrong and immoral, how could it describe the return of Christ as Jesus waging a righteous war? Or John Jefferson Davis in his evangelical ethics says, while the warfare in question is spiritual, nevertheless, the suitability of the war metaphor implies that the activity itself is not a violation of the purposes of God.

By way of contrast, God is never described as a harlot or in terms of other occupations that are by their very nature immoral, unquote. Perhaps John Jefferson Davis forgot about the parable of the unjust judge where God is compared or at least corresponds to an unjust judge. That's immoral to be an unjust judge.

God isn't an unjust judge. It was given as a contrast, but the point is the Bible can use all kinds of illustrations. You know, Paul used an illustration of being an athletic contestant in the Olympics.

All Christians and noble Jews were against that because the Olympics were run in the nude and it was considered an immoral thing by all godly people. But Paul said, well, you know, those who run in the Olympics, they all strive for a prize. Well, we're running in a race too.

He didn't mean that running in the Olympics was a good thing to do. He's saying, you see, they do it for a corruptible crown. How much more should we do what we're doing for a good crown, for an eternal crown? To use a metaphor doesn't mean that it's a good thing, but on the other hand, I have never said that war is an immoral activity.

These guys are all coming from the position, you see what that is, they are arguing against something they've never read any support for. They've never read a pacifist book, apparently. I'm not a pacifist entirely, but when it comes to war, that's, I'm afraid, the camp that they put me in.

These people don't even know what the pacifist is saying. The pacifists that I'm aware of do not believe war is always immoral, but they're starting with that. Okay, these guys must say war is immoral so the angels wouldn't do it if it was immoral and using the warfare motif for the Christian life, that wouldn't be right if it was immoral.

Robert Morey says, Jesus spoke with obvious approval of a king who waged a just war to punish a wicked people by putting them to death. I laugh because he called it a just war in Matthew 21, 33 through 41. While Jesus was not discussing war per se, his use of a just war model for this parable is possible only if Jesus accepted the Old Testament concept of the just use of force.

Oh my goodness, my goodness. Matthew 21, 33 through 41. What does that say there? Matthew 21, let's take a look there.

He said, this is an example of Jesus endorsing the just war model. Do you remember

what a just war is? I'll remind you if you forgot. Here's another parable, verse 33.

There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a wine press in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vine dressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage time drew near, he sent his servants to the vine dressers that they might receive the fruit, et cetera, et cetera.

So they killed him. They killed the vine dressers or the servants and so forth. And then it says, they killed the son that he sent.

And then it says in verse 41 or verse 40, therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine dressers? They said to him, he will destroy those wicked men miserably and lease his vineyard to other vine dressers who will render to him fruits in their seasons. Now, this is the example of just war. Where do you see a just war here? You've got maybe more like a police action.

The man is not waging a war. He owns this property. He's got tenants on there that are killing his servants.

And he goes and he punishes them. This is not a war. And if it is a war, it's not a just war by the standards that they define just war because it's not entirely defensive.

It's a retaliatory move. If you want to see what kind of war God approves of in the New Testament, look at Matthew 22. Yeah, verse two, the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged the marriage for his son, sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding.

They were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants saying, tell those who are invited, see, I've prepared my dinner, my oxen, my fatted cattle are killed. All things are not ready, come to the wedding.

They made light of it. They went their ways, one to his farm, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully and killed them.

But the king, who in this parable represents God, heard about it. He was furious. He sent out his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned up their city.

This is a reference to God sending the Roman armies to destroy Jerusalem in 70 AD after the Jews rejected Christ when he sent them the invitation. They rejected it. He was angry.

He burned up their city. Now, is that what anyone calls a just war? A king is angry because they turned down his invitation. So he goes out and burns their city down and annihilates the population.

Well, that's not what most people call a just war, but God is entitled to do it. God can do

whatever he wants. But the imagery of the parable is not that of the just war advocates.

It's something entirely different. This is, you know, for God to use war as a motif in parables is okay. War is not in itself objectionable.

The question in my mind and yours has always got to be, well, what am I supposed to do with reference to this thing? Not what, not is war okay in some cases. Now here's another argument. This number 10, is capital punishment wrong? No, the Bible supports capital punishment, both in the Old and the New Testament.

I agree with that. Then it goes on. There's no difference between war, capital punishment and defending your wife from a rapist.

From Robert Morey in his book, *When Is It Right to Fight?* He says, the New Testament also recognizes the justice of the death penalty. Without the death penalty as part of Jewish law, Christ could not have died for our sins. That is not a very good defense for the death penalty since Jesus did not die of a just use of the death penalty.

He was framed. I mean, if God hadn't approved the... Where did these guys go to school? Without the death penalty as part of the Jewish law, Christ could not have died for our sins. He didn't die under the Jewish law.

He died under Roman law. The Romans did it. If the Jewish law said nothing about death penalty, the Romans would have still killed him.

Where are they getting this non-think stuff? Well, it's desperation is what it is. It is desperation to prove something that cannot be proven from the Bible. It's really what it is.

I hope you don't think I'm being impolite to these people, but it's hard to be polite to nonsense. It says, without the death of Christ, no salvation was possible. That's true, of course.

The death penalty was the means God used to provide salvation for sinners. Now, so far, I don't disagree with his support of the death penalty. I believe in the death penalty.

I just think he doesn't have any idea how to argue his point. He thinks the death penalty is a good thing, because Jesus died under it. The death penalty is only good when guilty people die from it, not when good people die from it.

Jesus was a victim of injustice, not of the righteous death penalty the Bible demands. It's no connection. Anyway, ethics in the Christian, R.C. Sproul said, the issue of a Christian's involvement in war is an extension of the more primary question of capital punishment.

In a certain sense, war is capital punishment on a grand scale, unquote. I've heard a lot of Christians say that. R.C. is a good one to quote, because everyone reads R.C. Sproul



these days.

He says, you know, war, that's just like capital punishment on a grand scale. I see. I see.

Interesting, the church fathers all said that war was like murder on a grand scale. Modern ethicists who say they're Christians say war is capital punishment on a grand scale. The early Christians all said it was murder on a grand scale.

Now, I think there's a moral difference in murder and capital punishment. And I do believe that capital punishment is right. But I have not yet seen a war fought which was like capital punishment on a grand scale.

The difference is this. Capital punishment finds a man or a woman who has done something worthy of death and gives them what they deserve. Isn't that what capital punishment means? It kills them.

They deserve it. They earned it. Is that what happens in war? Everyone who dies did something that is a capital offense.

And we're just going out there being righteous and killing all those guilty capital offenders. That's not what I've seen happen in war. I've seen a lot of people who are not combatants, are not criminals.

They get taken out. The same bomb takes them out as takes out the bomb factory. That's not capital punishment.

That's something entirely different. There's no connection. Now, there would be a similarity if the war was a just war.

Because on the conditions of just war, it's entirely defensive. There is guaranteed non-combatant immunity. The use of force is restricted to that which is necessary to restrain aggression and no more.

All of those things are part of what a just war definition means. But when has there been a war like that? Again, if we say Christians should fight in a just war but not an unjust one, fine. That means Christians should fight in no war that's ever been fought yet because there's never been a just war yet.

Even the most just of them all, I told you this last week, the most just war of all that has happened in this century, I think, is probably World War II. But the good guys, that means us, did things that had no correspondence to just war guidelines. Fire bombing Dresden, nuking Hiroshima, is that just war? Is that capital punishment? Did all the citizens of Hiroshima do something worthy of death more than the people over here did? No, it was vengeance.

And it was nasty. And yes, it ended the war. And a pragmatist, if that's what we were,

we're not.

We're Christians, we're not pragmatists. A pragmatist would say, well, it was a good thing because the war ended. Okay, be a pragmatist.

I'll be a Christian. Christianity has to call justice, justice and injustice, injustice. You kill people who aren't guilty of crimes worthy of death, that's not capital punishment, that is murder.

And all the early church fathers said, war is murder on a grand scale. Modern Christian ethicists, no, it's capital punishment on a grand scale. Well, you decide.

Think about it. Lorraine Bettner in his book, *The Christian Attitude Toward War*, said, and the policeman or the soldier who defends his country, like the judge who protects society, does not act with a malicious motive to avenge a personal wrong, but with an altruistic motive for public safety. He performs his duty not as an individual, but as an officer of the state.

And in the scriptures, war among nations is given the same status as capital punishment among individuals. So again, we have that comparison made. Okay, it is not so.

Some wars are. Some wars are like capital punishment in the Bible. God says, these people all deserve to die, go and kill them all.

That's, if they did that, when the Jews did it, it was like capital punishment. There is no war in the New Testament or in modern history that conforms to those. Well, see, if God said this, if God told the commander of the, let's say, the British army, every last German deserves to die, every man, woman, child, and animal need to be obliterated.

And then we went and fought them, we'd be doing the right thing. Why? Because God knows what they deserve. And he said so.

Did we have any such messages from God when we fought any of the wars of this nation? Even in the war for independence, did God tell us that all those soldiers that we shot should be killed? Now, maybe they should, because they were aggressors. And we could say they were murderers. And if we believe in capital punishment and so forth, in a war where really there's no one that we could possibly kill except people who are themselves murderers, I would say that is probably a pretty close equivalent to capital punishment.

And for that reason, I have less to say against the Revolutionary War than some wars, because it was, on our part, seemingly a defensive war. On the other hand, it was a war that was fought because Christians did not do what the Bible said, which was honor the king. Now, I know, oh, am I in trouble now? I know I'm in trouble now.

I've been here before, many times. When Paul said to honor the king, the king he was talking about was Nero. Nero was the king who bathed Christians in tar and burned them for his amusement in his gardens, who dressed himself in animal skins and attacked their bare genitalia for fun, the man who kept boy prostitutes for entertainment, the man who murdered his own mother, the Bill Clinton of the Roman Empire, right? Not even close.

Bill Clinton is a choir boy compared to Nero. Hitler is a choir boy compared to Nero. And Paul said of Nero and all like him, honor those who are in authority.

Now, we, well, King George, you know, he was a tyrant. Really, how many Christians' genitals did he eat? It gets quiet sometimes. Okay.

Evangelical ethics, John Jefferson Davis said this. He said, a further difficulty, I'm passionate. Let me just let you know.

Someone who gets as passionate as I do may seem mean. I don't feel mean. I don't feel angry at these guys.

I just like to debate. They're debating me. They struck first.

They wrote the book. I'm answering them. John Jefferson Davis said, a further difficulty with the pacifist interpretation of the New Testament text is the confusion of private and public duties.

Yeah, there is confusion, but not on my part. I know the difference. He says, as a private individual, considering only my own interests and standing before God, I may choose to literally turn the other cheek in the face of unjust aggression.

When I stand in a relation of guardianship to third parties as a civil magistrate, a parent or a husband, however, then the responsibilities of Christian love have a different application. By the way, I agree with him on that. Because of my love for those under my care and out of concern for their lives and welfare, I must resist unjust aggression against them.

Love of my neighbor does not mean standing idly by while my wife is being brutally raped. It means using whatever force is necessary to protect her life and safety. My divine obligation to provide for the needs of my own family certainly includes, as an irreducible minimum, protecting them from deadly assault, unquote.

Not too many things I disagree with on that statement. The difference is that he equates fighting in war with protecting your wife against a rapist. Now, it may be that if your side loses the war, the enemy will come in and rape your wife.

You don't know. God knows whether that's true or not. You can't kill people in

anticipation of what they might or might not do.

That's not what your... Even just governments aren't allowed to do that. You don't say, that person looks like he might do a criminal act. I think I'll take him out in advance just to prevent it.

Now, if they know he's plotting to do it, and he's got the power, and there's nothing between you and him, he's right there, and it's about to happen, stopping him is indeed a just thing to do. But you can't see a guy who's over there on the other shore, three states away, and say, that guy is going to come and rape my wife. I'm going to go take him out right now.

Well, maybe he isn't going to rape your wife. You can't kill people in anticipation of crimes that they might someday commit. You can do, I believe... Now, see, pacifists don't agree with me on this.

But I believe you can resist someone who's trying to rape your wife, or kill... or anyone else's wife. They always say, your wife. Because they want to make sure... They want to really get it all emotional.

They say, what would you do if someone was going to rape your wife and shoot your mother in the head, and you could stop them with deadly force, wouldn't you do it? Yeah, I would. But you don't have to be so close to home. If I saw someone trying to rape somebody else's wife, or shoot someone else's mother in the head, I'd stop them too.

You don't have to use so much emotionalism on me by making it my family. I'm interested in justice, period. If I see an innocent victim about to suffer deadly and unjust violence, I am prepared to do whatever I can do.

But I am prepared to only do that which I can prove is a just thing. And I would certainly never kill a person unless I could see that he is in the act, or almost on the very verge of the act, of doing something that for him is worthy of death to do. Then I could feel myself justified, I believe.

But to say war is just like defending your wife from rape, it's not so. It's too great an extrapolation. War means taking out whole ships.

With Christian sailors as well as non-Christian sailors. War means taking out whole submarines. I have Christian friends on submarines, and some of them in Russia are Christians.

If you know who Brother Andrew is, he's the God smuggler guy. He said that most Russians, most Russian Christians are pacifists by conviction, but they are required by law to... They can't be conscientious objectors, so they have to fight, they have to join the army. And he said that they all just hope that they won't ever have to fight anyone, but

they go in the army.

Now, suppose... Did you ever read the book Vanya? Anyone ever read about Vanya? Vanya was a Russian soldier. Suppose we went to war against Russia, and he was on a ship, and we bombed the ship. Now we say, well, he went to heaven.

Yeah, that's true, so did the people that Nero killed. That doesn't justify Nero killing them. The fact of the matter is, although Christians go to heaven when they die, killing Christians isn't an okay thing to do.

Especially, it isn't a thing for Christians to do. Well, number 11. Our freedom of religion was won and has been maintained by men who have fought in wars.

Shouldn't one who enjoys the benefit of a free society defend that society? These are good arguments, aren't they? Aren't they the arguments you think of? About this? Our freedoms have been acquired and maintained by people fighting in wars. We benefit from those freedoms. Should we be so cowardly or so unthankful that we would not fight in wars so that future generations, or simply to pay our dues for the benefits we receive, shouldn't we be willing to do what others have done? Boy, it's a... You know, that sounds like a good argument.

Some of the people who made it would include Lorraine Bentner. In his Christian Attitude Toward War, he says, if the people of Europe had not resisted the Mohammedan invasions, Europe would have been captured, and humanly speaking, Christianity would have been stamped out. If at the time of the Reformation, the Protestants had not resisted the Roman Catholic persecutions, crimes such as were practiced so freely in the Spanish and Italian Inquisitions would have become common all over Europe, and Protestantism would have been destroyed.

If the American colonists had not fought for their rights, this country would not have gained its independence. Now, on one level, that sounds like it's probably true. I mean, we don't know what would have happened.

I mean, we can't go back and say, let's run that tape again, but leave this part out and see what happens. Suppose the colonists had not fought for independence. I'm glad they did, in a sense.

I'm sure glad I benefit from it. But in a sense, I'm sure that Jacob's family was glad that his brother sold him into slavery too, because that saved their lives eventually. But it wasn't a good thing for them to do.

Did Canada fight a war of independence against the Romans? Did Canada fight a war of independence against England? Did Australia? Are they not independent free nations today? I mean, internally, they're socialistic, so they're not as free as we are, but we're going that way too. We'll be there soon. But the fact is, we have no Revolutionary War of

Canada or Revolutionary War of Australia, but they have essentially what we have.

Now, we could say that's because we led the way, we fought the war, we paid the price, we did it all, and it kind of enlightened them. But even so, Britain didn't have to say, you know, those Americans, they did a really smart thing. I think I'll grant independence to Canada and Australia too, without a fight.

I mean, who knows what God might have done? The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord. He turns it with his sword. What if someone prayed for a century and didn't shed any blood? Is it possible we could have had our freedoms? I don't know.

We just can't go back and run the tape without that. We know what happened. We can't really say what would have happened.

And that's the problem with this kind of argument. This kind of argument is, if these people had not fought, look at the terrible things that would have happened. Well, we don't know.

Maybe they would have happened. Maybe they wouldn't have. Maybe God would have done something else.

If Esther hadn't gone in before the king, God would have had to raise up a deliverer from some other quarter, Mordecai said. If, you know, if we didn't do that, then God would have had to do whatever he had to do, it seems to me. But the question is this.

Did the action taken justify or was it justified by the objective? The Reformation. If the Protestants had not fought the Roman Catholics, the Reformation would have failed. Okay.

Where in the Bible does it say the Reformation had to be defended by blood? What if the Reformation had failed? People who still believed in God could still be saved and worship God. They just have to be tortured. Well, we don't want that.

Who wants to be tortured? I'm not going to volunteer, thanks, but I'll tell you what. I'd rather be tortured. I say this theoretically because I haven't faced it yet, but I mean, this is the spirit of Christianity in the first three centuries.

I'd rather be tortured and do what's right inside of God than do what's not right inside of God to avoid torture. I mean, that was the spirit of genuine radical Christianity for three centuries. I think it's still the Christianity that's in the Bible.

It's better if the will of God be so that you suffer for righteousness than for unrighteousness. You know, I won't go on and on. I could.

Let me skip down to John Jefferson Davis here. Actually, a lot of these repeat the same thing. I'm running late.

Let me give another quote here. This is from Lorraine Bettner. He says, A brief glance at history should convince us that most of the religious and political liberty we enjoy was made possible only through the willingness of our forefathers to struggle for their natural human rights.

Our American Republic owes its very existence to the brave men who were ready to do battle for home and loved ones and for civil and religious freedom. Now, this rings a bell with us Americans. Oh, boy, are you right about that.

I'll tell you what, those freedoms, they're sacred. Anyone who wants to take my freedom, I can kill them, and I'll be just before God because they should not take away my freedoms. And where do you find that in the New Testament? Anyone recall that great verse in the New Testament that tells us killing people for freedom is the right thing to do? In fact, where is it in the Bible that even tells us that we have a right to be free? Any ands, any verses? Where does it say that slaves in the New Testament should fight for their liberty? Or does it not say, are you a slave? Care nothing about it.

If you have the opportunity to be free, take it. What did Paul advise slaves to do? They didn't have our freedoms. Shouldn't they fight? Shouldn't they kill their masters? That's not what the Bible says.

Is it? Is it even close? Or is it the opposite? What does the apostle of Jesus Christ tell us about our freedoms? If we lose them, we're still the Lord's free man. That's what he says, 1 Corinthians 7. He says, he that is a slave is the Lord's free man. He that is free is the Lord's slave.

Who cares? Now, we care because Paul said, if you can have your freedom, take it. But he said, if you can't, don't worry about it. Paul didn't ever set up freedoms such as we take for granted and we love and we are addicted to.

So addicted to that like a drug, we'd rather kill than give it up. Even if maybe, you know what? Is it conceivable that our nation might come under the judgment of God? Does it by any means, could anyone argue that it deserves it? If it did and we lost our freedoms, would we say this is wrong? Or would we say this is what our nation deserves? And I'm domiciled here, you know? You know, if I'm domiciled in some African country and a famine goes through, I suffer the famine. But if that's a judgment from God, then I suffer because other people have done wrong.

But the fact of the matter is, biblically, there isn't anything that justifies our typically American sentiments. And I have them too. I want to make that very clear.

What I'm speaking about goes against my grain. And I guarantee you it goes against mine as much as it goes against yours. The difference is maybe.

I don't know what you're doing, what your reaction is. But I know where my commitment

is. My commitment is, it doesn't matter how much Christianity goes against my grain, I'm going that way.

My grain be damned if it's against God. I need to obey Christ. And I need to do so if it kills me.

That's what the Bible says. And you know what? The Bible says, if it does kill me, I've gained. To die is gain.

Is that a distinctively Christian idea or are there others outside of Christianity that could teach that? Only Christianity teaches that. And it teaches it in spades. It teaches it all the time.

Everywhere you look in the Bible, it teaches that. Do we want to be distinctively Christians? Or do we want to be kind of Christian but mostly what we want to be? That is the issue, is it not? With me it is. I never did learn how to stay popular.

How about this part of the question, 11. Shouldn't one who enjoys the benefits of a free society defend that society? Yes. In the way that God tells them to do so.

Do you know a society will be judged by God if it is wicked. It will be spared by God if it is righteous. If God wants to judge a society, no number of horses and chariots can stop Him.

And if God wants to protect a society, no invading force can succeed. Do we have examples of that in the Bible? More than can be numbered. Is it a teaching of Scripture? It is.

A nation falls to its enemies when God's judgment is on that nation. It is protected by God from its enemies when God's favor is on it. Now what does that tell you about how to protect a nation? Turn that nation to God.

And it doesn't matter what their defense is like. God is their defense. If the nation does not turn to God, God is their enemy.

And no matter how much force you bring against its invaders, God will win. And the way we protect our nation and the way we pay our dues for our freedoms is we protect our nation by promoting righteousness. If we are indeed doing that.

If we are not, we are sloppers. If we don't change the world that way, then we do take up the arms of the world and say, well, you know, I couldn't do it my way. I couldn't do it God's way, I'll do it the world's way.

Now there is a way. There is a distinctive calling for Christians, I believe. Lorraine Bentner says, Surely every person who has enjoyed or expects to enjoy the blessings and privileges of life in a particular country is under obligation to assist in the defense of



that country.

Okay, I agree. But not all defense is the same kind. We are in a warfare already.

And that warfare, if we are good at it, we'll save our country. If we're bad at it, we'll throw aside the weapons of our warfare and we'll take up the weapons of someone else's warfare because we have not done what we were commissioned to do. The church, I will say in America, has not done, has barely begun in this generation to do what it's commissioned to do.

And I think one of the problems is focus. We need to figure out what it is we're commissioned to do instead of just deciding that we already know because our ancestors did it always this way. Well, they didn't save the nation.

It is corrupted. It is gone over to the other side. It is the devil's playground.

Something they did didn't work. It's about time the church was the church. It's about time the Christians were Christians and did what Christians were told to do.

See what might happen. Who knows? Maybe God will do something. God knows we need Him too.

Well, the fact of the matter is, many people feel that if Christians don't fight in war, they're ripping the country off. Let me read you something that a 3rd century Christian apologist named Arnobius wrote in a book against the heathen. It was called, he said this, as a result of Christian nonviolence, which in his day all Christians were nonviolent, he says, as a result of Christian nonviolence, an ungrateful world has now for a long period been enjoying a benefit from Christ.

For by His means, this means, excuse me, the rage of savage ferocity has been softened and the world has begun to withhold hostile hands from the blood of a fellow creature. Here's a really interesting quote from Origen, about 285 A.D. in his book against Celsus. He said this, Our answer, Celsus said that Christians should fight to defend the empire.

Origen, the Christian leader of Alexandria at the time, said we do give assistance to kings, but in a divine way, not the ordinary way. We do this in obedience to the injunction of the apostle, who he quotes, Paul, I urge you therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority. 2nd Timothy 1 and 2. The more anyone excels in holiness, Origen said, the more effective is his help to kings, even more than is given by soldiers who go out to fight and slay as many of the enemies as they can.

He continues along the same vein, but he says that those who live a holy life and who promote the welfare of the kingdom by prayer, do more for the nation than soldiers do. Now, a lot of people don't agree with Origen, but I think he agrees with scripture, as near

as I can tell. How about this argument? Robert A. Morey wrote, Moral persuasion will not work as long as evil men walk the earth.

That's the 12th argument. Frankie Schaeffer, in his book, *Bad News for Modern Man*, said, the single greatest temptation for Christians is to imagine that the salvation won by Jesus has altered the human condition. Many attempt to judge the present world by the standards of the gospels as though the world were ready to live according to them.

Sin is not so easily overcome. What he's saying is, if you suggest Christians shouldn't fight in war, you're forgetting that even though we have moral persuasion through preaching the gospel and prayer, it's not good enough because the world is still full of evil people. And that statement by Robert Morey, moral persuasion will not work as long as evil men walk the earth.

Won't work? Moral persuasion won't? Do you know what happened to the Roman Empire? It was conquered by a 100% non-violent church. It took three centuries. Much bloodshed of Christians.

Many people went to heaven to get crowns. But without lifting a sword, without even thinking about lifting a sword, without even approving of lifting a sword, the Christian church conquered Rome. Rome had the great armies of the world.

They killed Christians by the millions. The church won. Rome lost.

Because God was on the side of the church. You say, well, look at all the people who died. That's right.

We don't want to pay that price, do we? We'd rather do it Rome's way. Because then maybe we won't get slaughtered. Hey, do you expect to live forever here? Do you expect not to die? I wonder.

Do you think you're not going to die? You are going to die. Hey, I'll tell you what. Dying a martyr for doing the will of God.

Being slain with a sword, head cut off, shot, firing squad, you name it. That is not as bad a way to die as to die of cancer. You're going to die one way or another.

There are worse ways to die. And you're going to die one way. To die obediently to Jesus Christ.

To say, I will love my enemy. I will do good to him that is trying to kill me. I will die, if necessary, doing so.

And I will be rejoicing forever that I did so. And that is not a bad move. Remember what Jim Elliot said when they said, you're a fool to go down to the Achaian.

They'll just kill you. He said, he is not a fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose. It's a different kind of wisdom.

It's Christian wisdom versus the wisdom of the world. Moral persuasion won't work. They said, well, I think they should read the history of Rome.

Thirteenth argument. Christian pacifism is a surrender to the philosophy of the political left and the theological liberal. Well, this mainly comes from Frankie Schaefer in his *Bad News for Modern Man*.

He basically says pacifists are just really playing into the hands of the communists. If we don't fight them with guns, they're not going to just roll over and go away. They're going to come kill us all or take away our freedoms or whatever it is that we're so afraid of.

Not sure how we got so afraid. Our ancestors in the first centuries were not afraid. We are a fearful people because we are a spoiled people.

We don't want our toys taken away. We don't want our freedoms taken away. We don't want our comfort taken away.

And therefore, we'll do anything, even things Jesus said not to do if we have to, to keep those things. I won't. I don't know if you will.

I hope not. But if you do, I'll... If you do so, if you study the scriptures and decide that's what you should do, I will bless you, believe me, if you reach a different conclusion, if you're going because you say, Steve, I heard what you said, but I'm reading my Bible, and I just don't see it. Steve, I'm reading my Bible, and I see an opposite thing, and I'm going to do that opposite thing.

I say, do what your conscience tells you before God if you see it in scripture. But don't do what isn't taught in scripture just because it's easier. Christianity didn't call anyone to take the easy road or the safe road, for that matter.

Last argument, what if everybody in the nation became Christians? Who would defend the nation? Yeah. You think that's going to happen? Anyone afraid that the whole nation is going to become Christian, every last one of us? Frankly, I would rejoice to see it. I don't expect it though.

There will always be some in the nation who have nothing higher to defend than their lives and their freedoms and their nation, and they will do it. I have higher things to defend. One is my holiness.

One is my soul and my family's souls. There are higher things more important than... Survival is not the Christian's priority. If it's yours, you have not yet dealt with the teaching of Jesus.

He that seeks to save his life will lose it. He that loses his life, for my sake shall find it. I don't believe any nation is ever going to see all people become Christians.

Though it could happen. Nineveh. Nineveh, they all got saved for a while.

You know what? They were spared by God. They were 40 days away from being wiped out by their enemies. And they turned to God and then they got another 100 years.

And they weren't invaded. Who would defend a country that's all Christian and all trying to please God so much so they'd rather die than displease God? You know who will defend them? God. And you might say, oh, come on.

Idealistic. Don't you know this is the real world Steve? This is the 21st century. Don't you know there's meanies out there? Communists.

There's Muslim terrorists. Don't you know what's out there? Yeah, but I know what's out further out there and closer in. There's a God who is not even impressed with all the atom bombs our enemies possess.

Not impressed in the least. He laughs. Now, suppose you say, well, Steve, if we were all Christians, that doesn't mean God's not going to let us be killed.

Look at the Christians in the arena. They got killed. True.

But if you get killed, is that so bad? You think it is? You're going to have some bad news coming down the pipe because it's going to happen. Unless you happen to be one of those lucky ones who's alive when Jesus comes back. Every generation of Christians so far, about 50 generations so far, hope they might be.

They weren't. And we might not be either. Get ready to die.

But that doesn't mean you have to take my position about war, but certainly do not do anything for fear of dying. Do it because God says do it. Now, I'm so upset with myself because I only took 14 of the 29 issues I want to take.

And they all, I want to take them all. I should have read fewer quotes, no doubt. And I just have kept you guys here so long I'm going to have to just let you go.

But I'll tell you what, maybe some of those things will come up in discussion. I hope you can stay a little longer. I hope we can keep going.

Notwithstanding my vehemence in my talk, I'm not upset. And if you disagree with me, I won't even be a little bit upset about it. I can cool down now.

The guys I was getting upset with aren't here.